1   <u>Abstract of the Disclosure</u>

2   The invention provides a method and system for secure data transfer and

3   dynamic definition of trustworthiness of various entities by multiple parties in a hierarchy

4   tree or graph structure. The invention uses digital certificates. Each party in the business

5   hierarchy can control and define various trust information including trustworthiness and

6   delegation authority for the entities it deals with. The ability of a party to redefine or add

7   trust information is controlled by the parties with which it has a relationship that are

8   above it in the hierarchy. Trust vectors and delegation vectors are used to store this

9   information. Each party can add trusted third parties to a security object without

10   compromising the integrity of security objects already issued. A sequence of security

11   objects including digital certificates can be modified without compromising the original

12   digital certificates in those security objects.

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